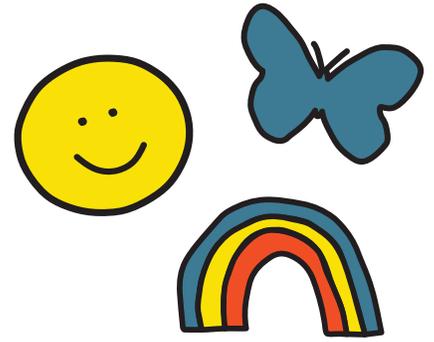


Educator Tips: Self-Care



An empty lantern provides no light. Self-care is the fuel that allows your light to shine brightly.

Self-care is an important aspect of being an effective educator. School providers are an important resource for students, which places an emotional burden on them at times. Behavioral science research tells us that many of our emotional resources have a limited capacity and function somewhat like a battery. When depleted, they need to be recharged to work best. As a supportive adult, many educators will share in both successes and challenges with their students and may be exposed to discussions of traumatic experiences of their students. Exposure to another person's trauma can cause secondary/vicarious trauma, compassion fatigue and even burnout. To combat these symptoms, we've created the following guide to help you better understand warning signs and ways to increase resiliency.

Signs of vicarious trauma, compassion fatigue and burnout include:

- Bottling up emotions
- Exhaustion
- Absenteeism
- Isolation from others
- Excessive blaming
- Sadness
- Difficulty concentrating
- Lack of flexibility
- Not participating in teamwork.

It's important to remember that compassion fatigue is a NORMAL response to an ABNORMAL circumstance. We can prevent and intervene early to lessen the impact by building resilience and specific coping skills.

Tips to help create and increase resiliency

- Take care of your body: Exercise, eat healthy foods, get adequate sleep and drink plenty of water each day.
- Spend time with others whose company you enjoy.
- Seek out comforting and relaxing activities that bring you happiness. Schedule this into your day/week.
- Allow others to do things for you when needed—ask for help!
- Take time away from electronics.
- Create a **gratitude list** of the people, places and things you are thankful for.
- Take 5-10 minutes during the workday to do a mindfulness activity.
- Participate in professional development to re-energize yourself.
- Build in humor, laughter and fun during your day.
- Identify and celebrate the successes for the day, week and month.

Professional	Psychological	Physical
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take time for lunch • Set boundaries • Do not work during your time off • Get regular supervision • Learn to say NO • Plan your next career advancement • Take a class • Take vacations and use sick days • Read a book about a topic you love 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mindfulness activities • Journal • Aromatherapy • Draw, paint, make art • Attend a community arts event • Relax in the sun • Garden • Read a self-help book • Join a support group • Think about your positive qualities • Practice gratitude exercises 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safe housing • Regular medical care • Eat healthy • Exercise • Get enough sleep • Take vacations/ staycations • Get a massage • Try acupuncture • Bubble baths • Take a walk 

Source: OlgaPhoenix.com

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